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THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

ONTOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF VALUE

I

FOR one who takes a large enough view, the relation of value to reality is one of the central problems of philosophy as it presents itself to-day. As a matter of fact it has always been so. If reality, or "true being," has been said to be the goal of reflection, it is because it has always been assumed that reality and value are ultimately one, or at least inseparably connected.

This seems to be an ineradicable postulate of our thought. We find reality intolerable without raising it to the sphere of value; but we also find it very difficult to think value without its implying reality and without giving it some form of being. If, then, the center of gravity of philosophical thought has recently consciously been moving from being to value, it is merely because that which has been hitherto tacitly assumed, is now explicitly recognized.

Yet, as I have sought to show in an earlier paper, "Value and Existence,"¹ precisely on these fundamental questions our thought is at present most incoherent. When it is possible for the same thinker to say, almost in the same breath, that value exists and that existence is a value,² he may indeed be giving expression to this ineradicable postulate of thought, but he can scarcely claim to have made himself very intelligible. That "values" are real in some sense, few would deny. Whether this conviction be expressed in the bald statement of the pragmatist, that "values exist like other qualities";³ or in more guarded statements such as, "the good that one aims at must be known to him, otherwise he could not aim at it or intend it, and being known to him, it must have some reality and existence";⁴ or again, even more generally still, "when we have value, and in so far as we have it, we have implication of reality,"⁵—in every

¹ This JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., pp. 449-452.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 449.

³ "Value and Existence," p. 457.

⁴ F. B. Jevons, *Philosophy, What Is It?*, 1914, p. 104.

⁵ B. Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 317.

case the conviction itself is the same. The difficulties arise when we seek to make our conviction articulate and our expressions intelligible. To this task we must now turn.

A large part of the work preliminary to such an undertaking has already been done. The contradictory views as to the relation of value to reality, noted in the paper already referred to, were seen to be due in large measure to equivocations in the concept of value itself and to consequent definitions of value in terms of quality or relation. We found that value is ultimately neither—neither a quality nor a determination of being, but a unique and independent form of objectivity. With these conclusions many of the difficulties of the problem disappeared.⁶

But at best only a part of the work has been done. If the contradiction and incoherence of which we justly complained are partly due to ambiguities in the value concept and to untenable definitions, they are no less due to equally serious ambiguities in the concepts of existence and reality. It is not accidental that, as in one of the statements quoted, we so often say “real or existent *in some sense*.” In this use of ontological predicates discretion is doubtless the better part of valor—and the discreet philosopher will enter this field of discussion only with the greatest caution, but I do not see how such discussion can be avoided. I will therefore attempt, as briefly as possible, some classification and analysis of these notions of existence and reality. First as to the notion of existence.

II

We have already found it useful to distinguish between “narrower” and “broader” views of value. We also find a similar equivocation in the concept of existence. For the narrower view existence has a very definite and specific meaning. It is sharply distinguished from other possible forms of being, such as, for instance, subsistence or essence. Temporal determination is its *sine qua non*, and at most there are only two kinds of existence, physical and psychical. Existence *for* mind or will is “pseudo existence.”⁷ For the broader view, on the other hand, existence is much more liberally conceived. It may include, as in a recent presentation of this view,⁸ immediate existence, mediate existence (physical and psychical), *gegenständliche* existence or subsistence, logical existence

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 464.

⁷ Meinong. Also B. Russell, *Problems of Philosophy*, p. 155.

⁸ Marbe, *Vierteljahrsschrift für Wissenschaftliche Philos. u. Sociologie*, 1912, XXXVI., Heft 2, a most valuable discussion. Also, J. M. Baldwin, *Dict. of Philos. and Psych.*, p. 421, on “Existence,” as “denoting determination or givenness in a context, by which its meaning is largely determined.” So used also throughout his *Genetic Logic*.

or validity, and imperative existence, or the existence of norms and values for will. In general, the idea of existence varies all the way from the narrowest of conceptions to one so broad that it "degrades" existence to a general character of all objects. On the latter view, to say that a thing exists is meaningless until it is said in what way or what sense it exists.

It is not necessary to decide between these two views at this point. It is sufficient to recognize them and to bear in mind that our conception of the relation of value to existence must necessarily be determined by an acceptance, conscious or unconscious, of one of these views. Now let us consider the concept of reality.

The two concepts, existence and reality, are often used interchangeably. Royce, for instance, explicitly asserts⁹ that he will so use them. But surely, if such procedure does not presuppose an entire philosophical theory, it at least implies the "broader" concept of existence. It is sufficient here to note that if one accepts the narrower view, he must of necessity distinguish between existence and reality. This, many, including the scholastics, have found it necessary on occasion to do, saying that the essence or subsistence of a not yet existing, but "genuine future fact" can be called in some sense real apart from existence. We can hardly deny reality to an event in the past, although it no longer exists. Its one-time existence gives it reality. But this independence of space and time relations can be carried further. An object such as a table, that has not yet existed and does not now, is forever and fundamentally different from, let us say, similarity and difference which subsist, but in the nature of the case never can exist. "Reality" is thus widened to include, beside existence in the narrow sense, the concept of potential existence.¹⁰

It is, however, doubtful whether we can, except quite arbitrarily, stop at this point. There are many who hold that, without violating our feeling for reality, so to speak, we can not refuse to include what is called subsistence. Thus Külpe¹¹ finds the real in the immediately given, in which, then, existence and subsistence are to be distinguished. So also Lessing¹² refuses to deny reality to subsistent objects, insisting that "it will not do to call numbers, for instance, *daseinsfreie Gegenstände*."

Partly as a consequence of these difficulties, and partly for other reasons which will appear in the sequel, there is a third concept of reality fairly constant in the history of thought, and differing vitally

⁹ J. Royce, *The World and the Individual*, Vol. 1, p. 51, note.

¹⁰ Meinong, in numerous connections.

¹¹ *Die Realisierung*. Also Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

¹² *Studien zur Wertaxiomatik*, p. 19. So also Wodehouse, *The Presentation of Reality*, seems to demand this broader conception of reality, holding that it is coextensive with presentation and recognizing various universes of reality.

from any of the preceding. In the first place it recognizes none of these limitations. "Reality" has a meaning not to be identified with any one of these retrospective definitions, nor with all of them taken together. It is rather, as one writer has phrased it, "an attribute which plain man and philosopher alike predicate of objects to which they ascribe especial importance." A eulogistic, value-connotation is inseparable from the notion. It can not be used *except* invidiously, except in contrast with the "ideal" or what not, which thereby becomes unreal. It is applied now to one, now to another, of the definitions of existence examined, but this application is invariably guided by a conception of importance. Without these distinctions, being is applicable to all objects whatsoever, but the concept has then become meaningless. "What is important is necessarily essential and what is essential is real." Or, as Euchen has phrased it, "for an ultimate reflection reality and value are identical, since the highest object of such reflection is just the full ground of the value of existence." With the recognition of this value connotation, inseparable from the notion, comes the further conception of degrees of reality.

With these varying conceptions of existence and reality the reader is, of course, entirely familiar. He is aware also that to them are in large part due the confusions in value theory and that they must be taken into account in any attempt to disentangle the difficulties which beset the problem of reality and value.

III

So much by way of preliminary. Let us now turn to the problem itself. It has already been put before us in our original statement of the ineradicable postulate. As we find reality intolerable without raising it to the sphere of value, so we find it impossible to think value without its implying reality, or itself having some form of being. Let us consider the second part first. As thus stated, our problem is divided into two specific questions. They constitute precisely the two most discussed ontological problems of value, and the two, in our answers to which, we are most incoherent.

The first of these may be stated as follows: Is value dependent upon reality? Does value presuppose reality? To this question, as is well known, the answers are varied, depending upon the conception of reality held. For some (as we have seen) value is predicable only of *real* (existing or potentially existent) objects; for others any object, *merely as object*, may have value. The second question concerns the "reality" of value or values themselves: Do values exist? Have they reality? Here, too, the answers have been varied, depending upon the conceptions of existence and reality. It has been said: (a) they do exist; (b) they do not exist, but have subsistence; (c) they have neither existence nor subsistence, but are merely valid.

Both of these questions have indeed arisen in our earlier papers. In so far as certain conclusions followed from our analysis of value, they have been already stated. They were, however, tentative precisely in so far as the concepts of existence and reality still remained unanalyzed. It is necessary, therefore, to carry our study a step further. Let us then consider the first part of the proposition, that value presupposes reality, that "wherever we have value we have an implication of reality."

It is, perhaps, not wholly clear just what presupposition or implication means. We shall, however, probably not be very far wrong if we say that any element is presupposed which is not contained in the experience itself, but which appears in the epistemological, not merely psychological, analysis of the experience. Whether, indeed, there is an epistemological sense of the term other than the logical, or whether all cases can be reduced to the logical relation of part to whole, we may leave undetermined. In any case, the point here is that the analysis is not merely psychological. Does, then, value presuppose the existence of its object?

The classical statement of the affirmative position is, of course, Meinong's. I consider it epoch-making in the analysis of value, although it is not final, as our criticism will show. In the earlier form of the theory it was explicitly stated that value presupposes the *existence* of its object, or, in its psychological form, the feeling of value presupposes the existential judgment. I have already shown elsewhere that the statement can be maintained in neither form. With the psychological aspect we are here not concerned.¹³ To the more objective phase of the problem we have already given a negative answer in the paper "Value and Existence." But for our present purposes the argument should be carried a step further.

Now it is, of course, true that any object to have value or be a value, as you please, must *be* in the sense of *being an object*. This is true however we may consider value, and whether we take implication in the psychological or logical sense. If we take existence in the broader sense the proposition is undoubtedly true, but it is meaningless. But this is obviously not what is meant. Taken in its narrower sense, however, existence is certainly not necessary. The untenability of this view is so generally recognized that I may perhaps be excused from laboring the point.¹⁴ Without repeating the analysis here, we may unhesitatingly say that there are many cases in which existence enters only as an assumption. Is it not then possible to say that *potential* existence, or "reality" in the sense of the narrower definition, is still present as a necessary presupposition of value?

¹³ For a statement and criticism of his view, see my *Valuation, etc.*, pp. 38-49.

¹⁴ R. B. Perry, "The Definition of Value," this JOURNAL, Vol. XI., p. 151.

Meinong makes much of this concept of potentiality,¹⁵ but his position, even with this modification, can not be maintained. There are several kinds of objects described as "ideal" to which even potential existence can not be ascribed, but to which it seems difficult to deny value. We may conveniently divide them into two classes: (a) those that by their very nature can not exist (in the narrow sense of the term), but which may be said to subsist; and (b) those that have neither existence nor subsistence,—"impossible objects." Let us consider the first.

In arguing against existence, either actual or potential, as a necessary presupposition of value, Perry remarks that "I may like two and two to equal four." Now for myself, I can find no meaning in this statement; the inherent absurdity in this form of expression seems to me fatal to the identification of value with "liking and disliking." But it suffices to raise the question. If our earlier studies are valid there can be only one answer to the question. Merely subsistent objects may undoubtedly have value. We need only note here the bearing of our results upon this specific point. In showing, as we have, the universality of the value category, that value is an *a priori* form of objects as such,¹⁶ the value of merely subsistent objects is assumed. In showing that the relation "better than" is not limited to existent objects it was likewise implied.¹⁷

There is, however, another class of objects that presents very serious difficulties. In an earlier connection¹⁸ I said, I was inclined to think that not even the subsistence of an object is necessary to its value. Indeed this is also implied in the principle of the universality of the value category. But for several reasons a more detailed examination of this point is also necessary. It concerns what are called "impossible objects."

The most remarkable and interesting of these are certain objects, ideals or limiting and regulative concepts if you will, in the sphere of ethical valuation. "Ideals" in general have the characteristic that they *are* not, but *ought to be*. Now many, perhaps most of these, are possible, have potential existence, but it is certain that some of them are not. They are what we call "impossible objects," inherently contradictory. Thus, for instance, the object, changeless or unmixed happiness. That it *is* an object is beyond doubt. I may think about and understand it, though of course I can not envisage it. Now it may well be that it is not only non-existent, but impossible. It may contain a contradiction in its very structure, and yet it also contains a

¹⁵ "Für die Psychologie und gegen den Psychologismus," etc., *Logos*, Vol. III.

¹⁶ "Knowledge of Value," etc., this JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., p. 675.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 678.

¹⁸ "Value and Existence," this JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., p. 464.

value connotation of which it can not be stripped. Of such objects—perfect happiness, or complete self-realization, it seems to me not senseless to say, though they are not, and indeed can not be (in any sense of existence), yet they ought to be.¹⁹

But it is not only in the ethical sphere that we find this situation. There are, for instance, such objects as a frictionless machine, *perpetuum mobile*. Impossible both perceptually and logically, they are yet so related to possible objects that the value of the latter in some way implies the value of the former. Science itself is full of such objects, of such fictions, as Vaihinger would call them. Imaginary quantities, the infinitely little, the ether conceived as perfect fluid or perfect jelly, are cases in point. Why or how this is so, is not so clear. Various reasons have been given. For the impossible objects of science the pragmatic explanation, with its concept of purely instrumental value, may perhaps be sufficient. For the so-called impossible objects of ethics and religion it certainly is not, as we shall presently see. All that we are concerned with here is the undoubted fact that impossible objects may have value. The value of an object persists where the being of the object can not be interpreted as existence, potential existence, or logical possibility.

So much, then, for the facts. Now for their bearing upon the “ineradicable postulate” with which we started. Shall we not draw the extreme conclusion (of Nietzsche, for instance, in the sphere of emotion, and of Vaihinger, in the realm of cool intellect), that there is no necessary connection between the value of an object and its reality? The conclusion seems inevitable. And yet I confess that, for myself, I can not be satisfied with it. I recognize that “there is nothing in the idea of value that requires the existence of actuality of its object,”²⁰ nothing indeed that requires its potential existence or logical possibility. On the other hand, I am equally impressed with the fact that, “when we have value, and so far as we have it, we have implication of reality.”²¹ For not only does interest, psycholog-

¹⁹ The thought that underlies this apparent paradox is this. Approximations to these “ideals” are possible. But beyond any given happiness or degree of selfhood there is always a higher (with our way of experiencing is bound up the notion that beyond the valued thing there are objects of more and less value); and from the “better than” follows *a priori*, the ought to be. The impossible objects are bound up with the possible by the *a priori* value relation itself. Is it not, for instance, entirely possible to compare the intrinsic value of two objects even if both are impossible; to say that one is better than the other, or ought to be rather than the other? Thus taking the two ideals of unmixed happiness and complete activity, as in Paulsen’s illustration of the drug, it would, I think, be possible to say that one ought to be rather than the other, even if both were impossible objects.

²⁰ Perry, *op. cit.*

²¹ Bosanquet, *op. cit.*

ically, imply a presumption or assumption of reality, a "prejudice in favor of reality," if you will. The dialectical analysis of value notion itself shows it to be presupposed. It *lies in the nature of value as such*, as we have seen,²² that beyond the valued thing there is always another object, more or less valuable, that given any two objects, one must be better than the other. From this it follows that one ought to be rather than another. Now we are compelled to will according to this *a priori* form of value. If the postulate were unrealizable, we should have an intolerable world.²³

Lessing expresses this same point²⁴ by saying that the *existence* of a value (value object?) is *a priori* better than its *non-existence*. There are two questions which seem to be raised by this statement. If this is true, either subsistence must be reckoned as a form of existence (which Lessing does) or else timeless objects must be excluded from the sphere of values, for existence in the narrower sense does not apply to them at all. There are many cases indeed where the existence of the valued object is better than its non-existence, but there are also cases where, the existence of the object being impossible, the expression itself has no meaning. It seems clear then, that as it stands the statement is untrue. What it really registers is the ineradicable presupposition of reality in all value. This, I take it, is the true inwardness of the "ontological proof," the perennial revival of which would be a scandal of the most serious kind were it not just for the fact that it expresses something inherent in the notion of value itself.

Here, then, we have a real embarrassment of the value consciousness, if not an actual ontological antinomy of value. Several positions are here possible. We may say with Vaihinger that "this is just the tragic of thought, that the most valuable objects have, as reality, no value." We may, with Kant, add to the world of being as hitherto defined, a world of "practical reality." Or we may finally resort to a redefinition and analysis of the concept of reality itself. For the present I leave the situation as it is.

IV

Let us now turn to our second specific question in which the ontological problems of value come to the fore, and in which the incoherence of our thought manifests itself. Do values exist? Have values reality? If I mistake not the incoherence reaches its maximum here and, upon examination, will be seen to result from the same embarrassment, and to involve the same antinomy, which the examination of the preceding question disclosed.

²² "Knowledge of Value," *etc.*, p. 677.

²³ Cf. my paper, "On Intolerables," *Philos. Rev.*, Sept., 1915, p. 492.

²⁴ *Studien zur Wertaxiomatik*, 1914, p. 21.

We find it difficult to think value without implication of reality, but we also find it equally difficult to think value without giving *it* some form of being. To the question, do values exist? we have also given an answer in our earlier studies, but here also the answer was merely tentative for the reason that we had not yet analyzed the concepts of existence and reality. Let us carry the study a step further.

Do values exist? The answers are, as we have seen, varied and contradictory enough. "Yes, emphatically," is one answer. "Yes, they exist if they are felt. Just as much as gravitation, pressure, collisions, exist."²⁵ On the other hand, just as emphatically, the existence of values is said to be a "nonsense." To ask whether values exist appears to Rickert²⁶ to be a sort of *pons assinorum* in philosophical thought.

The scandal of such a conflict of opinion is to my mind equalled only by its needlessness. The conflict is partly due, of course, to the confusion of "value" and "values"²⁷ and the dispute as to whether value is a quality or relation, or neither, but its ultimate source is in the equivocal meaning of "existence." For it is entirely clear that if we take existence in the sense of the broadest definition, as Sheldon, for instance, does, of course we may say that value exists, as does everything else in the world of objects. But our statement is wholly meaningless—until we say *how* it exists. On the other hand, if we take it in the narrow sense, which clear thinking seems to demand, value can not exist. The feeling of value exists. The qualities valued, sometimes called "values," subsist, as also the relation of "value for a subject." But value, as such, is simply valid. Now it is, to be sure, open to us to take existence in the broader sense, and to limit our statement by saying, values exist *for will*, or have "imperative existence." But in thus retaining existence it is difficult to meet the charges of those who maintain that we have thereby turned it into "pseudo-existence."

But let us be entirely clear in this matter. There is indeed a certain justification for this latter way of speaking; there can be no practical harm in saying that values exist when we mean thereby that certain feelings, sentiments, or demands exist. As we have seen, in our discussion of the objectivity of value²⁸ it is not fair to ask whether such values are relative to human feeling or objectively "real." They are both. When the social nature of valuation is considered, the alternative between objectivity and relativity to human feeling is wholly unsound. But it is evidently quite another ques-

²⁵ W. H. Sheldon, "The Empirical Definition of Value," this JOURNAL, Vol. XI., p. 123.

²⁶ H. Rickert, "Zwei Wege der Erkenntnisstheorie," *Kantstudien*, 1909.

²⁷ "Value and Existence," this JOURNAL, p. 456.

²⁸ "Knowledge of Value," *etc.*, this JOURNAL, p. 681.

tion that is here at issue. Can we, with a proper sense of the meaning of the terms, speak of the "value objective" itself as existing, of this "validity," out of which oughtness springs, as a form of being, as "existence for will" or "imperative existence?" We can not, I think, without eviscerating the plain meaning of existence.²⁹ And if, philosophically speaking, we can scarcely say that value *exists*, there is just as little reason for saying that value *subsists*. At most we can mean merely that the qualities valued subsist, or the relation, "value for a subject." Strictly speaking subsistence for will is as contradictory as existence for will. Value itself is merely *valid*. That is its objectivity.

The answer to our second problem is then much like that to which we were led in the case of the first. It is difficult to think value without giving it some kind of being, and yet clearness demands that we should. The conclusion seems inevitable, and yet here also I find it impossible to be satisfied with it. Evidently the ontological antinomy of value has returned in a slightly different form. Rickert, who has perhaps carried out this last line of thought more consistently than any one else, apparently feels the full force of the difficulty. He recognizes that "it is the custom in philosophy to call any 'last principle' upon which philosophy comes, reality (*Realität*).'' From the beginning the absolute is conceptually identified with the real. The word real when thus used is always used with "a certain emphasis." It is identified with the "highest, deepest, inmost, most essential or other superlatives beyond which nothing more is thinkable." To say, then, that the absolute value is merely valid and not real, seems to contain a contradiction in terms. We might choose for it perhaps the term, *Wert-Realität*. Nevertheless, Rickert continues to insist that clear thinking will not permit this, and is content to leave the antinomy as it is.³⁰

²⁹ In this connection let me clear up a point which has been responsible for much of our incoherence in this matter. We speak of the "realization of value" of "bringing a value into existence." Does not this imply that values exist? But the slightest analysis will show that these are the crudest of conceptions. When I speak of bringing a value into existence, what I really mean is that the existence of some object is better than its non-existence, and that the object is brought into existence. Or again, an object is desired, or felt as a value, which was not before; a value is said to be brought into existence. Here again what is brought into existence is the desire or feeling, not the value. Of the existence of the object, or of the feeling to which it is related, we may speak, but not of the value. I had occasion to criticize Lessing's statement that "the existence of a value is *a priori* better than its non-existence." There we saw that, if by value he means valued object, it is simply untrue. We now see that, taken in its original form, it is meaningless.

³⁰ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, 3d edit., p. 360.

V

The problem of this paper is the relation of value to "reality." This, the ontological problem of value, we found could be conveniently divided into two specific questions, Does value presuppose the reality of its objects? Do values exist; are they real? To both these questions we have been able to give certain answers. They are briefly these. In so far as "reality" is limited to any of the narrower retrospective definitions—in terms of existence, potential existence, or subsistence, the answer to both questions must be negative. On the other hand, we have found, for equally good reasons, that value is inseparable from reality. Though we can not say that value necessarily presupposes either the existence or the subsistence of its object, we feel compelled to say that it presupposes reality. Though we can not say that value (properly speaking) either exists or subsists, we feel compelled to say that true values are real. Is there any solution to these antinomies of the value consciousness?

Now it is undoubtedly true that in general philosophers are only too ready to find antinomies where there are none. It is also true that apparent antinomies are often due to lack of definition and analysis. It may be so in this case. It may be that the "factual and apparent divorce between value and reality" (some aspects of which we have seen) "can not," as Bosanquet says, "be argued in support of the conceivability of a complete one."³¹ It is conceivable that the fault is with our conceptions of "reality." It is entirely possible, at least, that this "prejudice in favor of reality" implicit in all valuation, and which survives all criticism, is wholly consistent with a true definition of reality. This is my own belief. In seeking to justify it I shall first present a line of reasoning which seems to me both new and important. It rests upon a deeper analysis of this "prejudice in favor of reality" itself.

An interesting use has been made recently of the expression "prejudice in favor of actuality" (*Vorurteil zu gunsten des Wirklichen*). It has been argued³² that a natural prejudice in favor of existing objects has led us to ignore the importance for thought and knowledge of objects that merely subsist, that do not and can not have existence. It is chiefly owing to this prejudice that epistemological idealism is possible, and with it the concept of "existence for mind." There is clearly knowledge of what is non-existent, *e. g.*, mathematics, and since what is known does not exist outside of us, it must exist in our minds as thought. If all our knowledge were of existents, this would be scarcely possible. Now there is un-

³¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 300.

³² Meinong, "Über Gegenstandstheorie," in the *Grazer Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie und Psychologie*, pp. 1-2.

doubtedly sense in thus speaking of a prejudice in favor of existence or actuality. Recognizing the great world of non-existent objects that yet have value for knowledge, it is indeed a prejudice that would deny them objectivity because they do not exist. But may we not carry this line of thought farther? Was it not a similar prejudice that led Plato to identify reality exclusively with essence? Here also that which is *important* is *ipso facto* real; not only real, but *the* real. If, then, there may be a prejudice in favor of either existence or subsistence, *may there not also be a prejudice in favor of both as exclusive forms of reality and as against other forms of reality?*

That this is so, that reality is not to be identified with either of these categories, may be seen from the following. We may indeed speak of a prejudice in favor of existence or subsistence; but can we with equal justice speak of a prejudice in favor of reality? To me it seems a contradiction in terms. I may well charge a man with prejudice in favor of one sphere or *aspect* of reality, but to charge him with a prejudice for reality as against unreality would seem to be an inanity possible only to a philosopher at his wits' ends. I can not, without just this inanity, turn a man's interest from real objects to unreal. If I seek to overcome his prejudice in favor of existent objects, I thereby assume that the non-existent objects are real in some sense. The eternal protest against any philosophy that calls the world of esthetic objects a world of unreality registers this fact. "The world of being, of universals," says Russell, "is delightful to all who love perfection more than life." In this there is perhaps an element of "private endearment," and it would indeed be a prejudice to identify reality wholly with this world, but surely it is sheer perversity to say that it is "*merely* an affinity which the human mind may develop to certain provinces of essence." Their value presupposes their reality. This prejudice in favor of "reality" is not a matter of mere "liking and disliking"; it is the *sine qua non* of all thinking *überhaupt*.

Is this line of reasoning sound? I think so. If it is, what are we to make of it? Several important consequences seem to me to follow.

In the first place, this so-called prejudice in favor of reality is *no* prejudice, but a necessity of thought. The eulogistic element in reality is indeed inevitable. "For an ultimate reflection reality and value must be identical, since the highest object of such reflection is just the full ground and value of existence." That the reality of value means its existence or subsistence *is*, however, a matter of prejudice. The difficulty of thinking value without reducing it to one of these forms of being is due to special preferences which, though practically and socially ineradicable, perhaps, are clear enough upon reflection.

But if this is so, something else follows. It is clear that "reality" can not be identified with "existence," potential existence, or subsistence, with any of them singly, or all of them taken together. It is clear also that the ontological predicate is meaningless until we state specifically the sphere in which it is applied, and that this meaning is always determined by some value the acknowledgment of which is presupposed. We are thus compelled to abandon the narrower conceptions of reality and to take the broader view already stated. Reality then becomes "a predicate which plain man and philosopher alike attribute to objects to which they ascribe a special importance." It is true that both plain man and philosopher identify reality, now with existence and possible existence, or again with essence. But if they do so, it is always by virtue of a special emphasis which has its justification in a certain evaluation. The meaning of reality can never be exhausted in any of these retrospective definitions with which it is on occasion identified.

This in turn leads to something even more important, I think,—a conclusion which constitutes the chief subject of discussion in this second part of my paper. This view of the ontological predicate seems to me to imply also the conception of the logical priority of value. The ontological predicate is meaningless except as its meaning is determined by the acknowledgment of a value presupposed. This is clearly but a technical way of stating the other half of the proposition with which we started, namely, we can not think reality ultimately without raising it to the sphere of value. We found it impossible to carry out completely the proposition that value implies existence or being. Is it not possible to establish the converse, that existence and being always imply value? Is not the coherence we are in search of attainable in this direction? Let us see.

VI

With certain forms of this conception the philosophical world is entirely familiar, pragmatism and the so-called imperativism of Windelband and Rickert. If I read them aright, in both cases one of the fundamental motives of these daring attempts to solve the problem is precisely the incoherence in our thought which has been emphasized from the beginning. It is for this reason that both have sought to change the center of gravity of thought from "being" to "value." Now that they have themselves not escaped incoherence, I have pointed out at several points in the earlier papers. The question is whether this concept of the priority of value, of reality itself as a value, can be stated coherently at all. For myself, I think it can.

In considering this question let us first note that the problem here raised is the converse of that of our third section. There we

started with the proposition that every value presupposed the existence (or reality) of its object, but upon examination, the value was seen to persist not only when existence, but also all the "narrower" conceptions of reality, were eliminated. Now we shall ask, to what extent the value implications in existential, or ontological judgments generally, may become potential or be finally suppressed, and their significance as judgments and predicates remain?

Without treating pragmatism too lightly, we may agree, I think, that the discussions which have raged about its devoted head justify our rejection of the view in this form. It is true, as I have said, that psychologically all existential and truth judgments have value references, but criticism has shown that they may become highly potential, very rarified indeed, and that all values, in the narrower sense (utility ethical, esthetic) may be eliminated. All except the value of truth itself, all interests except the interest in reality, the "*prejudice*" in favor of reality itself. It is probable indeed that an assumption of some value in the narrower sense is present (psychologically), but logically it is certainly true that I can want to know the truth without any reference to *this* value. How about the so-called value of truth? Here is the point at which imperativism enters. Happily for us, it has put the problem in a form precisely adapted to our method.

All judgments, it holds, that appear to refer to a transcendent being permit of a transformation—this is the important word—such that they merely assert facts of consciousness, and only in this form are they beyond doubt. Such transformations, it is held, can be carried out in the case of all judgments whatsoever, even perceptual (instead of saying the sun shines, I can say I see the sun), and the denial of a transcendent being never leads to contradictions *unless* (this is the important point) we deny the value, and consequent obligation, of making just this distinction. To deny this is to make all our statements meaningless. Here then is the point where our transformations must stop. This is the last element of "value" in our ontological predicates which can not be eliminated. Validity, the transcendental reference of truth, is the one absolute value upon which all these distinctions rest. The "transcendental minimum" is a value. What shall we say to this?

First of all it must be clear to the competent and candid critic that this putting of the position is not open to many of the criticisms that apply to pragmatism, nor, in general, to that superficial kind of objection which charges it with the romantic belief that "things must be beautiful and good in order to exist," or "whatever exists must satisfy us." But eliminating this kind of criticism, it is still a question whether the view will stand logical analysis. Now, I admit

without hesitation that the forms in which the position is usually stated, imperativism and voluntarism, present serious difficulties. The incoherence of pragmatism is patent. Desire and will are the presuppositions of existence and truth, for value here means a relation to desire and will. But, since desire and will are themselves existents, it can not be said that existence and truth presuppose value. Nor is the situation really different for imperativism and voluntarism. The latter, as we have seen,³³ does not escape psychologism, and it is doubtful whether imperativism is in any better case. You can not lift the *relation* of obligation or the act of will out of the sphere of existence merely by calling them over-individual, nor can you transcend psychology merely by prefixing the term transcendental.

But it is not at all clear that this is the only form in which the position may be stated. I have already insisted that the conception of value as a unique objective, the reasons for which have already been restated and need not be repeated here, escapes these objections. Still, granting this point, there remain certain logical difficulties.

For one thing, it is held that the structure of the concepts value and being (or truth) forbids either their identification, or the subsumption of one under the other. Non-existence and untruth are the contradictories of existence and truth, but negative value is not the contradictory of positive. In another connection we made use of this fundamental difference to show the impossibility of conceiving value as a form of being.³⁴ Is not this an equally effective barrier against subsuming being or reality under value? I think not. My reason for so thinking is the fact I have all along been insisting upon, namely, the double meaning of reality. There is one meaning, as we have seen, in which it is identified with one of the concepts, existence, subsistence, *etc.* (or perhaps all of them taken together). Now non-existence is the contradictory of existence, while negative value is not the contradictory of value. But there is a second meaning of reality according to which *un*-reality is not the contradictory of reality. The negative has rather the force of the negative in such concepts as *unnatural* or *inhuman*. As in the very definition of natural or human there enters a value moment without which the negation is meaningless, so, as we have seen, in the ultimate concept of reality there is a eulogistic element that can not be eliminated. Any concept of "degrees of reality" implies this second concept of reality. There are certainly no degrees in existence or subsistence as such. If you identify reality with any one of these, nothing in the universe is more real than anything else. But there may very well be relations of degree between these forms of objectivity.

³³ "Value and Existence," this JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., p. 465.

³⁴ "Knowledge of Value," *etc.*, this JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., p. 680.

But leaving this point for the moment (I shall take up the question of degrees of reality at the close), let us examine a still more fundamental criticism. It is that this view, in any form, involves a circle. With the statement that truth and reality *have* value, we need not quarrel, the critics say. Nor indeed with the proposition that all true judgments *should* be affirmed. But from this we can not conclude that all judgments are true that should be affirmed, or that reality *is* a value. But suppose we admit that *only* a judgment that ought to be passed is true. What, after all, does "ought" here mean? It means indeed that a value is acknowledged; but what is this value? Is it not just what we have been accustomed to call truth? Have we not merely the tautology, true judgments are those that are true? If we seek to carry truth and reality back to value, do we not move in a circle, just as truly as we have seen we do when we seek to define value in terms of existence and truth?³⁵

I admit that for a long time I believed this objection to be final. I am inclined to think now that there is no circle. It is, of course, patent in pragmatism. I think it is also present in imperativism and voluntarism. Acknowledgment of an over-individual obligation, or over-individual will presupposes, as has already been pointed out, a judgment of the existence of that will or the truth of that obligation. But I am inclined to think that the difficulty is not present if the conception of value as an "objective" is maintained. Then the judgment of truth or reality does not spring from the acknowledgement of an ought. Rather this acknowledgment of an ought follows because the value acknowledged is a valid objective. Prior to the obligation is the acknowledgment of the value objective.³⁶

VII

Let us now return to the point from which this technical argument started. Our sole object was to bring some degree of coherence into our conceptions of the relation of value to reality. The present argument seeks merely to justify the "logical priority" of value, the belief that the concept of reality contains an implication of value that can not be eliminated. Every value, we found, presupposes the reality of its object. Yet we could eliminate all specific presuppositions of existence, potential existence, subsistence, *etc.*, and value still remains. On the other hand, applying the same method to the proposition that every ontological judgment presupposes a judgment or acknowledgement of value, the same result does not follow. Most of the value implications can be eliminated, but not all. The "transcendental minimum" in such judgments is itself a value.

³⁵ "Value and Existence," this JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., p. 455.

³⁶ In this I am, I think, in essential agreement with the position of Emil Lask, *Die Lehre vom Urteil*.

I consider this conclusion most important, although I maintain it with considerable reluctance. It is true I presented a somewhat similar conception of the priority of value in the last chapter of my book on *Valuation*, but I was not then fully aware of all its implications and difficulties, some of which have just been taken into account. The difficulties that still remain in the conception are clear enough to myself and must also be evident to every competent reader, but I am fairly confident that in some form it is the only one that can make our thought coherent. In a word, the reason why we can not think value without its implying the reality of its object, despite the fact that the object is unreal in any limited sense of the definitions, is because reality is itself, in the sense meant, a value concept. The reason we persist in saying that value is real when clear thinking demands that we shall call it neither an existent nor subsistent, is that in so doing we are merely asserting the character of value as an ultimate objective. In the remaining paragraphs I shall indicate some of the reasons for this view. First of all let us again examine our so-called ontological antinomies of value.

The vulgar prejudice in favor of actuality is a constant source of embarrassment of the value consciousness in ethics and esthetics, and is especially potent in religion. It is constantly exploited by the philosophers. It has been said, "It is vain to ground religious faith on the validity of values. They must also exist" (Perry). Says Baldwin, the actuality of religious objects can never be proved, and against the turning of them into values the unfulfilled categories of reason will always protest."³⁷ All of which is true enough if we persist in our prejudice in favor of actuality. But what is there ultimately to prevent the human mind from freeing itself from its prejudices? As I have pointed out at length, where the presupposition of reality *means* existence or logical necessity, there the acknowledgment of that presupposition is the necessary condition of the value. But there are many values that do not have the presupposition of reality in either of these definable senses, as I have shown in my earlier studies and more specifically in the present discussion of "impossible" objects. Here the reality of value does not imply the existence or logical possibility of its objects. This Kant, indeed, saw long ago in his doctrine of "practical realities." But his view should not be confused either with pragmatism or with that other form of the statement which, beginning with F. A. Lange and his "standpoint of the ideal," has produced such modern conceptions as that of Santayana. In asserting a world of imagination which is at the same time valuable and unreal, they may, indeed, escape the in-

³⁷ J. M. Baldwin, *Genetic Theory of Reality*, p. 155.

coherence of pragmatism, but only to fall into that intolerable inanity of bidding us interest ourselves in the unreal.

In the second place, there is the conception of "degrees of reality" to which reference has already been made. It is clear enough that, as Mr. Bernard Muscio says,³⁸ the concept is meaningless unless reality is "eminently a value concept." Stripped of this eulogistic connotation, none of the ontological predicates (existence, subsistence, *etc.*) has degree. On the other hand, there is scarcely any question that *within* and *between* these spheres of being, degrees of reality can be applied with a wholly significant meaning.³⁹ But Mr. Muscio is wholly in error, as I have tried to point out elsewhere, in thinking that the idea rests upon "the postulate that the universe will satisfy us." Actually it rests upon something quite different. It lies in the value notion as such, *a priori*, that every object as such has either actually or potentially a place in the scale of value, and this notion of degree inevitably transfers itself to reality which the value notion implies. But this implication has nothing to do either with desire or belief, but with insight. It does not rest upon the "romantic" or "sentimental" belief that "things need to be good or beautiful or spiritual to exist at all," but upon the cool recognition that, by the very structure of our being, we are bound to find interest and to value objects that are not, and for all we can see can not be, real in any narrow or retrospective definitions of this term. But to deny reality to these "values" means the intolerable inanity of finding interest in the unreal.

More important than either of these conclusions, however, are certain further implications regarding fundamental problems of philosophy. With justice the modern idealist has been accused of equivocation in the use of the terms reality and degrees of reality. For if he defines reality as "an inseparable aspect of sentient experience," it is certainly true that nothing can be more real than anything else.

³⁸ "Degrees of Reality," *Philosophical Review*, November, 1913.

³⁹ It is, for instance, not absurd to speak of degrees of reality within the world of existents. Take the distinction between an hallucination and a normal sense perception. There is sense in saying that the latter is more real than the former, although both are undoubtedly existent and in existence there are no degrees. Nor is it otherwise in regions outside existence. Both the geometrical circle and the "round square" are *objects*, although neither exists. The circle has subsistence and perhaps the round square may be said to have that peculiar third form of objectivity which Meinong has characterized as *ausser-Sein*. But though the first merely subsists and the second has not even this form of being, it is still possible to say without absurdity that the circle is more real than the round square. But what do these facts mean? They mean simply that, if one can not deny sense to this way of speaking—and I can not see how one can—one must admit not only the necessity of the distinction between "reality" and being in any of its definable forms, but also the inseparability of the notion of reality and value.

For him there can be degrees of reality no more than for the realist who defines reality in terms of "independence of sentient existence." So long as the idealist identifies existence with reality, the criticism is perfectly sound. Existence permits of no degrees whether defined idealistically or realistically. So far the realist is undoubtedly in the right. But if he avoids this equivocation, it is only to court futility. To define reality as "independence of the subject" is just to degrade it to that generality, where it becomes meaningless. Of course all real objects are independent of the subject, but just as they are all inseparable from experience. To give any meaning to his ontological predicates, he will have to distinguish differences within this world of objects. But with the appearance of these distinctions, must not value distinctions appear also? As you can not have two or more objects without its following *a priori*, that one is of more value than the other, so you can not have two or more types of objectivity without its following that one is more important, and therefore more *real*, than the other. Degrees of reality will creep in "willy nilly." The truth of the matter is that the very debates of the realist and idealist prove that our conception of reality is sound. When the philosopher takes as his criterion of reality "independence," or "coherence," he is really taking certain values as his defining terms, aspects of experience which are important from different points of view. Royce has shown this for "independence" in a very suggestive and convincing way. The battles of the philosophers have been really but the playing of certain values over against each other, identifying reality now with this, now with the other meaning of existence, to which the broader interpretation of existence has given rise. This not only explains the persistence, the struggle for existence, of certain cardinal tendencies in philosophy, but suggests also that the solution of the problem must lie along the line of a value philosophy which shall weigh the relative importance of these different motives in experience.

The concept of reality here developed transcends, therefore, the idealistic-realistic contrast as ordinarily presented, as I believe a true philosophy, based upon a true conception of value, is beyond realism and idealism. But this is another story.

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